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RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0506
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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002473

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XOXO
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC KMDR IS

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Election of Barack Obama to President

Key stories in the media:

Leading media reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is arriving in the region today.

All mainstream media led with the election of Sen. Barack Obama to President of the U.S. Banners in Yediot: QAmericaQs HopeQ; Maariv:

QThe ChosenQ; Israel Hayom: QThe Obama EraQ; and The Jerusalem Post: QTriumphant Obama: Change Has Come to America.Q HaQaretz chose to highlight ObamaQs comment in his victory speech: QThat's the true genius of America, that America can change.Q The first page of the newspaper is a full translation of the speech.

All media reported that president-elect Obama has offered the post of White House Chief of Staff to Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D- IL). His father is a former Israeli who was a member of Menachem BeginQs Irgun underground movement.

HaQaretz reported that the purpose of PM Ehud OlmertQs visit to President Bush later this month will be an attempt to reach last minute agreements and extract a number of promises before both leaders step down. Olmert is looking for commitments from Bush on the peace process with the Palestinians, U.S. military aid and various arms deals.

Media reported that yesterday PM Olmert congratulated Obama and said: "U.S.-Israeli ties are special and based on shared values and interests that manifest themselves in close cooperation. Israel and the U.S. have a joint interest to improve relations." HaQaretz reported that FM and Kadima Chairwoman told the Knesset, in criticism of Likud Chairman Benjamin Netanyahu: QIf Israel represents itself as a country that opposes any [peace] process then the world, headed by the U.S., will try to force processes on it. Just saying 'no' has never helped Israel in any diplomatic sphere." Leading media quoted U.S. Ambassador to Israel James Cunningham as saying yesterday at a reception at JerusalemQs King David Hotel that Barack Obama will be a Qgreat president and a great friend of

Israel.Q The Jerusalem Post noted that Cunningham declared that it was a proud day in American history and part of a process, and lauded John McCain for Qhis incredibly gracious concession speech. HaQaretz reported that Obama could replace Cunningham immediately.

Many media and social activists wish for an QIsraeli ObamaQ: QWhy not an Ethiopian, Arab, or Yemenite PM?

Israel Radio reported that last night the IDF attacked Islamic Jihad positions in northern Gaza, killing an Islamic Jihad militant.

The Jerusalem Post quoted police as saying that PM Olmert will undergo a ninth round of investigation from the National Fraud Unit tomorrow.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday the homes of East Jerusalem Arabs were demolished, prompting riots.

Israel Radio reported that MK Israel Hasson, No. 2 in Yisrael Beiteinu and former deputy head of Shin Bet, has joined Kadima.

Election of Barack Obama to President:

Summary:

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: QIn an era when America became anathema in the world, and the Wall Street crisis dragged its people and many people all over the globe to the abyss of uncertainty and fear of the future, America chose the chance for peace and dialogue and socioeconomic repair in the spirit of the New Deal.

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: QThe members of the new administration will see with their own eyes that no one wants peace more than Israel. No one. Congratulations President-elect Obama on a historic victory. Godspeed.

Liberal columnist Yael Paz-Melamed wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: QA new wind will blow from the White House -Q not a hostile one, but a different one.

Chief Economic Editor Sever Plotker wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: QObamaQs electrifying election call, Qyes we can!Q becomes, for president-elect Obama a tough personal

question: Qcan he?Q Can Obama? Billions of people believe that he can, and that is already an excellent start.

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized: QAs a whole we must turn to the ancient rule: QIf I am not for myself, who will be?Q This is the lesson to be learned from the aftermath of the U.S. elections.

Block Quotes:

I. "The Dawn of a New Era"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (11/6): QThe election of Barack Obama as president of the United States is a moving, historic event that inspires hope.... Obama was elected not only because of his good qualities, his personal charm and his verbal abilities. He was chosen first and foremost because he represents, in the most acute and genuine way, the change for which the citizens of the United States so desperately yearn.... In an era when America became anathema in the world, and the Wall Street crisis dragged its people and many people all over the globe to the abyss of uncertainty and fear of the future, America chose the chance for peace and dialogue and socioeconomic repair in the spirit of the New Deal.... With his election, the deepest wound in American society, which was born with slavery but continued to bleed overtly and covertly in race riots and discrimination, has begun to heal. With Barack Obama's entry into the White House, the U.S., and together with it the entire world, stands on the threshold of a new era. If Obama succeeds in fulfilling the hope that is pinned on him, the day of his election will go down as the day that wrought a change in the entire world, and will grant those living there a reason to look forward to the future with hope.

II. "Mazal tov, Obama"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (11/6): QJust as the people of the United States were electing Barack Hussein Obama as their next president, Hamas was putting the finishing touches on a plot to abduct Israeli soldiers and break the relative cease-fire which has prevailed for the past five months.... Even as Hamas-controlled Gaza, fueled by religious fanaticism and mired in the culture of victimization, pursued its predictable violent trajectory -- 6,000 miles away, the splendor of peaceful change, representative democracy and political civility was on display for all to see. Those in our part of the world dedicated to rejectionism, violence, and terror will soon discover anew that the relationship between Washington and Jerusalem is above partisanship.

And the members of the new administration will see with their own eyes that no one wants peace more than Israel. No one. Congratulations President-elect Obama on a historic victory. Godspeed.

III. "The Dawn of a New Middle East"

Liberal columnist Yael Paz-Melamed wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (11/6): QWhen Israel pledged to vacate 26 unauthorized outposts and we did not even evacuate one of them, the friend from the White House [Bush] turned a blind eye.... A new wind will blow from the White House -Q not a hostile one, but a different one. If [ObamaQs] advisers for the region are indeed people like Dan Kurtzer, Dennis Ross, or Martin Indyk, one can anticipate more proportionality towards Israel and its policy. Those advisers, together with the powerful pro-Israeli lobby, in addition to pressure from the Pentagon, will certainly moderate American policy as Obama might perhaps have wanted to see it. But there will be change anyway. Apart from our politics, everything is changing, and the hope blowing from ObamaQs election is necessary for Israel, too.

IV. "Mr. World"

Chief Economic Editor Sever Plotker wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (11/6): QHuman kind is united today like never before. Democracy, in all its various and not always perfect

forms, is more common today than in the past. When people describe their problems in terms of dreams and not in terms of wars, Barack Obama is viewed as the right man in the right place. He crosses borders, religions, and races. All the world is Obama. And yet, the hard part is still in front of him. Obama has never yet managed anything except his own lection campaign, and that is not much. He is a American-style social democrat, who is getting Amrica in a condition of fear and trepidation -- astrong nation, but confused and expectant.... To win in the elections you have to know how to make promises. To lead after the elections you have to know how to keep them. The test of decisions is very different from the test of speeches. ObamaQs electrifying election call, Qyes we can! becomes, for president-elect Obama a tough personal question: Qcan he?Q Can Obama? Billions of people believe that he can, and that is already an excellent start.

IV. QObama and Israel

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized (11/6): QLike in the past, Israel adopted a neutral approach to both candidates.... At this time, the Mideast policy of the elected Democratic candidate is unclear. As his latest statements demonstrate, he might take steps that will lead to a rapprochement between Washington and Tehran, not between the U.S. and Syria.... At present it is IsraelQs duty to prepare anew and set its policy according to its interests to protect its well-being and the security of the state. Not one will take of our security. As a whole we must turn to the ancient rule: QIf I am not for myself, who will be?Q This is the lesson to be learned from the aftermath of the U.S. elections.

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